

Dear Subscriber:

This Iowa DNR Water Quality Listserv is a subscription service that you have requested. Its purpose is to deliver timely water quality technical information directly to your email. This listserver is targeted to those actively engaged in regulatory activities regarding NPDES permitting, wastewater facility construction, water quality standards, flood plain permitting and wastewater operator certification. This listserver will offer regulatory news, program updates and technical guidance.

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1. NPDES Permit Applications

Just a reminder - NPDES permit renewal applications need to be completed and submitted to the DNR at least 180 days before your existing NPDES permit expires (IAC 64.8(1)). If you do not receive any renewal notification from the DNR, you should download the forms and instructions on DNR's web page at: <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/npdes/forms2.html> and submit your completed application forms on time.

Incomplete applications delay the permit issuances and should be reduced. The DNR seeks input from you on how to ensure all the applications submitted are complete. Comments on this subject should be addressed to: Angela Chen, (515) 281-4736 or [angela.chen@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:angela.chen@dnr.state.ia.us)

2. City of DeWitt Finalizes Wastewater Loan

The City of DeWitt borrowed \$1.6 million from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to finance the cost of expanding and improving its wastewater treatment facilities. The new loan, in conjunction with federal grant funds, will help meet the needs of a growing community.

"DeWitt is located at a crossroads between larger cities. We offer a small town atmosphere that's also close to jobs. People want to live here," said Deanna Rodriguez, City Finance Director. "We expanded our wastewater facility back in 1996 and thought that would last for 20 years." The population growth, and the desire to have capacity in place to attract new industry, spurred the need to expand again, she said.

Iowa communities have financed more than \$660 million through the State Revolving Fund to protect public health and the environment and to improve wastewater, storm water, and drinking water infrastructure. The State Revolving Fund is administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in partnership with the Iowa Finance Authority.

"This was the third project we've done through the SRF. If the SRF had not been available, we would have had to do traditional bonding at a higher interest rate," said Rodriguez. "The guaranteed 3% interest rate on the SRF saved us money."

Construction of the wastewater project is expected to be completed next summer. The City also is moving its composting facility to an adjacent property due to the treatment plant expansion.

The State Revolving Fund offers low-interest financing for communities and many other groups, according to Patti Cale-Finnegan, SRF Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources. It includes programs aimed at helping farmers, landowners, livestock producers, businesses, and others to protect water quality. For more information on the State Revolving Fund, go to <http://www.iowasrf.com/> or call Patti Cale-Finnegan at 515-242-6043.

### 3. EPA Approves 2004 Standards for Cold Water Streams

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the DNR's revised water quality standards for cold-water streams. The DNR can now apply those standards, which it adopted in December 2004.

The revised standards protect certain aquatic life, such as trout, which need cold-water conditions to survive. The standards include a new process for determining which streams should be protected for cold-water uses. The revised standards also define two classifications, instead of one, to reflect the different uses by cold-water aquatic life. The DNR's Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) must approve the change of a stream's classification to a cold-water use. In addition, the DNR will ask the EPC later this month to approve proposed changes to the DNR's warm-water standards.

### 4. Water Quality Standards Frequently Asked Questions

Water quality standards are the cornerstone for many of the DNR's water quality programs. The standards define uses for rivers, streams and lakes in determining what the level of water quality should be for each water body. Some standards are oriented toward providing a safe supply of drinking water, some are designed to protect aquatic life and wildlife, and some are to ensure safe recreational uses for the public, such as swimming. The proposed rule changes will affect only recreational and aquatic life uses.

Iowa's water quality standards are in the process of major revisions. As the standards change, some wastewater treatment facilities and industries may need to make significant changes to meet the new standards. Here is one frequently asked question and its answer. For more information about water quality standards, visit <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/standards/index.html>.

#### 1. How much will the proposed revisions to the water quality standards cost?

Some facilities that discharge into streams affected by this change will not have to spend any money to meet the more stringent discharge limits because their facilities already can meet those new limits. Many facilities, however, will have to upgrade their treatment facility and that can be expensive. DNR estimates that these rule changes will cost between \$790 million and \$960 million statewide. This estimate includes capital costs, interest over 20 years, and the cost of operating the upgraded facility over 20 years. The complete Fiscal Impact Statement can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/standards/rulemaking.html>

In developing our estimates for economic impact, we made conservative assumptions about the appropriate level of protection for aquatic life uses and recreational uses in the receiving streams. These assumptions are based on projected or higher levels of protection than may be necessary to comply with the revised Water Quality Standards. A more precise estimate of the cost for a specific facility cannot be made until the new standards have been applied and the facility decides what they will do to meet the new discharge limits.

The cost of complying with these proposed changes may be further reduced through a Use Attainable Analysis (UAA). The UAA is a document that explains what level of protection (or use) is appropriate for that stream. Although federal law does not allow the state to use cost as a criteria for setting a standard, we can consider the impact to the local economy when conducting a UAA. EPA has written guidance on preparing a UAA and on considering economic impact. However, the guidance does not specifically state how much impact to the local economy is too much. EPA will review the technical merits of every UAA and either approve or disapprove any changes in designated uses associated with the UAA findings. Because of these uncertainties, the potential cost reduction from a UAA is not included in the DNR's estimate of the cost of implementing the proposed water quality standard changes.

Some people have criticized these changes by saying the money should be spent on controlling pollution from the watershed rather than from a pipe. The argument is that the majority of water pollutants come from the watershed and not the pipe. They are correct; 80-90% of the water pollution in Iowa comes from the watershed and not a city's or industry's discharge pipe. However, before we can start addressing pollution from the watersheds, we have to set the appropriate uses and levels of protection for Iowa streams. That is what we are proposing to do. This means some cities and industries will have to meet more stringent limits for their wastewater discharge.

#### Relevant Links

For more information on Iowa DNR water quality programs, please visit the following address:  
<http://www.iowadnr.com/water/index.html>.